

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Rare Indian Baskets

Santa Barbara, our neighbor to the south, will be celebrating her 182nd birthday next Tuesday, which will include in the program, of events a "once - in - a - lifetime" anthropology display. Monterey is a dozen years older than Santa Barbara. We shall celebrate the 194th birthday of this city June 6, with a Merienda in Memory Garden, sponsored by the Monterey History and Art Association.

The anthropology display will consist of Chumash Indian baskets. It seems there are only about 175 of these in the world, and 100 will be shown there after having been borrowed from the Smithsonian Institution, the Southwest Museum, Harvard University, Boston collectors and museums in London, Paris and elsewhere.

But we on the Monterey Peninsula will not be called upon to go to Santa Barbara to see a very valuable and fine collection of baskets and other Indian treasures, for we have in the Pacific Building a varied and valuable collection given to the State of California by Mr. and Mrs. W.R. Holman of Pacific Grove.

The entire Holman collection which numbers over 1,600 individual pieces, was given to the state in 1961. A basket plaque whose age is estimated at between 7,000 and 10,000 years, is one of the hundreds of items in the Monterey exhibit. The Holmans had been collecting the artifacts as a hobby for over 45 years. Most of the items are products of American Indian tribes but some are from Alaska.

Mrs. Holman said at the presentation: "We want people to see what a wonderful person the North American Indian was: I stand in awe of their work."

Chumash baskets are so rare because the Chumash themselves were wiped out by the blessings of "civilization" sometime between 1830 and 1850, after the coming of the white men. The tremendous artistry of these now-non-existent people lives on in the incredibly intricate design of their baskets.

The Chumash, who lived along the coast from San Luis Obispo to Malibu, like some of the other California Indians largely depended on a reed known as juncus for their weaving. They used the "coil" method of making the baskets so that every detail of the design had to be

known in advance to permit the exact counting of the stitches. The examples being sent here on loan from the East and abroad are heavily insured.

A feature of their showing will be a lecture at 8 p.m. Tuesday at the University of Santa Barbara by Dr. Lawrence Dawson of the Lowie Museum of Anthropology at Berkeley . . .

Tours of historic houses in Santa Barbara on Monday will be another feature of the birthday observance. Santa Barbara has preserved some of its famous structures even though it has had to move them. Mrs. George Finley, head of the Women's Project board of the Historical Society, has told of some of the problems involved.

A two - story, 14-room Victorian dwelling erected in the early 1860s by Judge Charles Fernald, was cut into three pieces and moved many blocks from its site at 422 Santa Barbara street in 1959. It was so tall that it was necessary to cut many power and telephone wires to permit its transfer to a new site on W. Montecito street.

The Riverside Municipal Museum and the Riverside Junior League have started a "history Hunt" group.

This group is interested in finding a house in Riverside that is typical of the early period, up to World War I. They wish to restore it, furnish it, and maintain it as a "Heritage House."